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LOVE'S GRADVATE

A COMEDY

BY

JOHN WEBSTER

PRINTED AT THE PRIVATE PRESS OF
H. DANIEL
FELLOW OF WORCESTER COLLEGE
OXFORD
1885

This Impreſſion is limited to One Hundred & Fifty Copies,
of which this is No. 59.

NOTE

THE idea of this volume originated with Mr. EDMUND GOSSE, when he pointed out how, under an unpleasant title and among matter which would be offensive were it not contemptible, there lies obscured a charming domestic drama of English country life three centuries ago, the work of a famous hand. Even the title is due to Mr. GOSSE, as much as the Essay he has kindly prefixed to the play.

JOHN WEBSTER has here laid aside the tragic thunders which his name calls to remembrance; or at least only lets them be heard in distant rumblings of sword-and-dagger fights on Calais sands, of Spanish Warships threatening the Kentish shore, or of fiery passions subdued just not too late. In "LOVE'S GRADUATE" we breathe a calmer and a fresher air; the virtues and failings of the Persons are those of our own country and of common life; by force of simple trustfulness evil is turned to good, and a tangled mesh of circumstance is unravelled to a happy conclusion. The crudities, for such there are, of metre, of plot, and sometimes of language, can easily be tolerated, and would, it may be thought, be mitigated in representation on the stage.

It has been the aim of the writer of this Note to restore WEBSTER'S original work, so far as is now possible, by means of simple omission of the scenes and parts of scenes which contain the underplot; and for these omissions he alone is responsible. Otherwise the text is that of DYCE, with a few slight verbal alterations, and many of punctuation. There are many passages in the play which a PERSON of English might greatly improve: and looking to the late date, 1661, at which it was first printed, the application to it of such critical ingenuity would seem at least defensible. This however cannot here be attempted.

Our play as now presented, enriched with the criticism of Mr. GOSSE, and embodied in the typography of Mr. DANIEL, is humbly commended to all true lovers of English literature.

S. E. S. R.

LONDON: March 22, 1885.

PREFATORY ESSAY

IN THE enſuing pages an enthuſiaſtic lover of the fame of Webſter *has performed a pious duty. He has extracted the ore from "a mineral of metals baſe", and the poetry from a work in which a poetaſter had more than a finger. It is peculiarly grateful to me that the Editor ſhould ask me to introduce his experiment to the world of letters with a few critical words, ſince the conception of the ſcheme was mine, as he kindly admits, and even the name of the new play. Moreover, if it be a diſcovery, it is the eldeſt child of my reſearch. I was hardly more than a ſchoolboy when I formed the view of* Kirkman's *venture which has been accepted by the beſt critics, and I have a peculiar fondneſs for this the earlieſt trophy of my ſpear & of my pen. When I firſt found an opportunity of divulging my opinion, in* 1874, *it was met with general approval. When, in* 1883, *I embodied it, with more confident expreſſion, in my volume of Seventeenth Century Studies, ſuch refined and learned ſtudents of our drama as Mr.* John Addington Symonds, *Mr.* George Saintsbury *and Profeſſor* Edward Dowden *pointedly congratulated me on it anew. Laſtly, leſt my theory ſhould not be found to bear the paſſage of years, on receiving the Editor's invitation, I applied to my old friend and earlieſt cenſor, Mr.* Swinburne, *begging him to glance once more at*

the original and at my phraſes, and to tell me whether the latter ſtill commended themſelves to him. I take his reply as final in its encouragement. He tells me that on freſh examination he ſtill "wholly concurs in my concluſion as to the parts reſpectively aſſignable to Webſter *and to* Rowley". *He adds, too indulgently, "Your analyſis of the play in queſtion was admirable", and I, remembering the tender and callow years I bore when that analyſis was conceived, am reminded of that paradoxical remark of* Théophile Gautier, *that we change in taſte, perhaps, certainly in force, from twenty upwards, but not in the quality of our opinions. Perhaps, then, I may be permitted to ſpeak in this one inſtance of my conjectures as of facts, without ſeeming to throw my lot in with the ſchool of arrogant pedants who meaſure verſe with their fingers, or if with ears at all, with ears for thickneſs and length like thoſe of Midas. With theſe men the trick of dividing dramatiſt from dramatiſt has become a diſeaſe, but I truſt that the inveſtigation, which our Editor has here at length illuſtrated, was conducted on my part with all due regard to none but ſound imaginative and metrical traditions.*

In 1661 *the bookſeller* Francis Kirkman, *who had been a collector of books before he took to the trade of a publiſher, ſent forth from his ſhop at the ſign of* John Fletcher's *Head, on the back-ſide of St.* Clement's *Church, a play in quarto entitled* A Cure for a Cuckold, A pleaſant comedy As it hath been ſeveral times Acted with great Applauſe. Written by John Webſter & William Rowley. *It was then nearly forty years ſince* Webſter *had been heard of alive, yet only ſeven ſince the firſt publication of his undoubted Tragedy of* Appius and Virginia. *Both the*

White Devil *and the* Dutcheſs of Malfy *were very ſhortly to be revived, and* Webſter *was the one Elizabethan poet, after* Jonſon, Fletcher *and* Shakeſpeare, *in whom the Reſtoration would take an intelligent intereſt. There is no doubt that it was a revival of curioſity about* Webſter *which induced* Kirkman *to print this old MS. play, in company with many others which he poſſeſſed. He was leſs happy in ſimultaneouſly preſenting to the public the windy traſh called* The Thracian Wonder *as being alſo a joint tragedy of* Webſter *and* Rowley. *It has doubtleſs been the worthleſſneſs of this latter play, which* Dyce *admitted into* Webſter's *works in* 1830, *and then rejected again in* 1857, *which has led to the neglect of its ſiſter-venture,* A Cure for a Cuckold. *At all events until I drew attention to this laſt, it had never received the critical examination which its partial beauty and dignity demand.*

It is perhaps the only play of double authorſhip which has come down to us from the ſeventeenth century which we can confidently and yet not raſhly divide in detail between its two parents. There ſeems in this one inſtance no danger whatever in diſſecting the piece, ſcene by ſcene, and labelling each one "Webſter" *or* "Rowley". *The circumſtances of its creation I have ſurmiſed to be theſe.* William Rowley, *a rough playwright of the Jacobean age, whoſe work bears no traces of that academic poliſh which a Cambridge man ſhould have brought from the College which nouriſhed* Spenſer *and* Gray, *had attained a ſudden ſucceſs with ſuch looſe comedies as* A Shoemaker a Gentleman *&* A New Wonder, Woman never vexed. *He came into ſo good repute for patching up other men's ſerious work with light town-comedy, that we find*

Day, Wilkins, Middleton, Heywood *and even* Maſſinger *happy to accept him in dramatic partnerſhip. To mix his lukewarm tide of wit with that of the author of* The Miſeries of Enforced Marriage *or of* The Mayor of Queensborough, *however, was one thing, and another to mingle with the dreadful Muſe of* Webſter. *Sooner might the chalky waters melt into the cryſtal below the walls of* Geneva *than* Rowley *become indiſtinguiſhable from ſuch a coadjutor as this. The reſult is that his coarſe & boiſterous little farce proceeds ſide by ſide with* Webſter's *ſtately comedy, & mingles with it as little as life below ſhould mingle with life above ſtairs.*

Hence the ſpirit of the two tiny dramas claſhes continually; conſiſtent alone, viewed together they are moſt inconſiſtent. Webſter's *characters are ſententious, gentleman-like and of a ſenſitive nobility,* Rowley's *are ribald & vulgar. In ſhort, not to repeat further what I have ſaid elſewhere, the* Webſter *portion of the joint production forms a complete and independent work which I have long hoped that ſome editor might ſee his way to detaching from its coarſe ſurroundings. This has been done at laſt, and* Webſter's *comedy is preſented to the reader without any of* Rowley's *mud adhering to it. The Editor has further adopted for the now otherwiſe nameleſs piece the title of* Love's Graduate, *which I ſuggeſted on the ſcore of* Clare's *proteſt, ſo ill ſuſtained by her, that ſhe will "never ambition have to become a graduate in Love's ſchool."*

The central ſcene of Love's Graduate, *the quarrel on* Calais *ſands between* Leſſingham *and* Bonville, *bears a reſemblance to another piece of Caroline drama which I had already noted, and which could not evade the obſervation of ſo profound*

a ſtudent of old plays as Mr. Swinburne. *He writes to me;—"Have you noticed the identity of motive between* Webſter's *part of* A Cure for a Cuckold *and the ſtory of* Montroſe, Cleremond *and* Leonora *in* Maſſinger's Parliament of Love? *I cannot but think that the two poets muſt have gone to a common ſource for the leading idea of their plots.* Maſſinger's *treatment of it is, I think, in his beſt manner,—full of noble grace and dignity."—This paſſage from* Maſſinger *it will perhaps pleaſe the reader of our play to be able to compare with the ſcene on pp.* 30—36. *As in* Love's Graduate, *ſo in the* Parliament of Love, *a captious woman,* Leonora, *not wholly realiſing her own wickedneſs, inſiſts that* Cleremond, *if he would win her love, ſhould kill his beſt friend firſt. Juſt as* Bonville, *on the very day of his marriage, is decoyed by* Leſſingham *to* Calais *Sands to be nominally his ſecond but in fact his victim, ſo* Cleremond *inſiſts, with the ſame duplicity, that* Montroſe *ſhould break the firſt appointment that the woman he loves has ever made with him. The ſcene in* Maſſinger *runs thus;—*

An open part of the Country near Paris.

Enter Cleremond *and* Montroſe.

Cler. This is the place.

Mont. An even piece of ground,
Without advantage; but be jocund, friend:
The honour to have entered firſt the field,
However we come off, is ours.

Cler. I need not,

So well I am acquainted with your valour,
To dare, in a good cauſe, as much as man,
Lend you encouragement; and ſhould I add,
Your power to do, which Fortune, howe'er blind,
Hath ever ſeconded, I cannot doubt
But Victory ſtill ſits upon your ſword,
And muſt not now forſake you.

Mont. You ſhall ſee me
Come boldly up; nor will I ſhame your cauſe,
By parting with an inch of ground not bought
With blood on my part.

Cler. 'Tis not to be queſtion'd:
That which I would entreat, (and pray you grant it,)
Is, that you would forget your uſual ſoftneſs,
Your foe being at your mercy: it hath been
A cuſtom in you, which I dare not praiſe,
Having diſarm'd your enemy of his ſword,
To tempt your fate, by yielding it again;
Then run a ſecond hazard.

Mont. When we encounter
A noble foe, we cannot be too noble.

Cler. That I confeſs; but he that's now to oppoſe you,
I know for an archvillain; one who hath loſt
All feeling of humanity, one that hates
Goodneſs in others, 'cauſe he's ill himſelf!
A moſt ungrateful wretch, (the name's too gentle,
All attributes of wickedneſs cannot reach him,)
Of whom to have deſerved, beyond example,

Or precedent of friendſhip, is a wrong
Which only death can ſatisfy.
Mont. You deſcribe
A monſter to me.
Cler. True, Montroſe, he is ſo.
Afric, though fertile of ſtrange prodigies,
Never produced his equal! be wiſe, therefore,
And if he fall into your hands, deſpatch him:
Pity to him is cruelty. The ſad father,
That ſees his ſon ſtung by a ſnake to death,
May, with more juſtice, ſtay his vengeful hand,
And let the worm eſcape, than you vouchſafe
A minute to repent: for 'tis a ſlave
So ſold to hell and miſchief, that a traitor
To his moſt lawful prince, a church-robber,
A parricide, who, when his garners are
Cramm'd with the pureſt grain, ſuffers his parents,
Being old, and weak, to ſtarve for want of bread;
Compared to him, are innocent.
Mont. I ne'er heard
Of ſuch a curſed nature: if long-lived,
He would infect mankind: reſt you aſſured,
He finds from me ſmall courteſy.
Cler. And expect
As little from him: blood is that he thirſts for,
Not honourable wounds.
Mont. I would I had him
Within my ſword's length!

Cler. Have thy wiſh: thou haſt!

[*Cleremond draws his ſword.*

Nay, draw thy ſword, and ſuddenly; I am
That monſter, temple-robber, parricide,
Ingrateful wretch.

The reſemblance here is wonderfully cloſe, and Mr. Swinburne, *as we have ſeen, believes that each poet drew his inſpiration from ſome common ſource. It may be ſo, but we muſt remember that The* Parliament of Love *is a play with a curious hiſtory. It is, not the laſt, but a very late arrival into the family of* Maſſinger's *plays. It was firſt printed by* Gifford *from a unique and incomplete MS., lent him by* Malone, *a MS. which, on being compared with the famous corrections in the* Duke of Milan, *appeared to be in the poet's own handwriting. It had been licenſed in* 1624, *a date rather low down in the century to be conſidered exactly contemporary with* Webſter, *and it had been entered on the books of the Stationers' Company in June,* 1660, *or a few months before* A Cure for a Cuckold *was printed, and then apparently withdrawn from publication. Again, this abortive attempt at publication itſelf is coupled in ſome vague way with the name of* W. Rowley. *The* Parliament of Love, *though excellently written, is perhaps leſs original in plot than any other of* Maſſinger's. *Two of its moſt effective ſcenes are borrowed from* Shakespeare, *and recall rather too baldly* Cymbeline *&* Winter's Tale. *Now* Kirkman *tells us that* A Cure for a Cuckold *had been a favourite acting play; "ſeveral perſons," he ſays in* 1661, *"remember the acting of it, and ſay that it then pleaſed generally*

well." My own opinion is, I confeſs, that Maſſinger *had ſeen it, and that the* Parliament of Love *miſſed publication, firſt in* Maſſinger's *life-time, and afterwards at the Reſtoration, becauſe the circumſtances in it reminded people too openly of ſcenes in this and other popular plays.*

Our beautiful little trouvaille, *our piece of ſilver-work by the ſculptor whoſe other groups are all in bronze, will know how to win the admiration of its readers. It breathes now for the firſt time, ſince its original appearance was a ſtill birth. This lovely fragment of the romance of* Elizabeth *came into the world when* Etheredge *was eating cuſtard, in a Chedreux periwig, on the bridge at* Paris, *and when* Dryden *was tagging rhymes into the* Rival Ladies *in pale following of* Corneille. Webſter's *freſh-coloured gentlemen were as old-faſhioned then as were the hoſe and the ſlaſhed doublets they had worn. We, with our new ſympathy for pure romance, are nearer to them after theſe two centuries than were Mr.* Kirkman's *cuſtomers, at the ſign of the* John Fletcher's *Head, on the morning that the play was publiſhed.*

EDMVND GOSSE.

LOVE'S GRADVATE

PERSONS

Woodroff, a justice of the peace, father to Annabel.
Francheford, a merchant, brother-in-law to Woodroff.
Lessingham, a gentleman, in love with Clare.
Bonvile, a gentleman, the bridegroom and lover to Annabel.
Raymond
Eustace
Lionel — gallants invited to the wedding.
Grover
Rochfield, a young gentleman and a thief.
A Sailor.

Annabel, the bride and wife to Bonvile.
Clare, Lessingham's mistress.
A Waitingwoman.

LOVE'S GRADVATE

Act I. Scene 1.

Leſſingham and Clare.

Leſſ. This is a place of feaſting and of joy,
And, as in triumphs and ovations, here
Nothing ſave ſtate and pleaſure.
Clare. 'Tis confeſſ'd.
Leſſ. A day of mirth and ſolemn jubilee,—
Clare. For ſuch as can be merry.
Leſſ. A happy nuptial,
Since a like pair of fortunes ſuitable,
Equality in birth, parity in years,
And in affection no way different,
Are this day ſweetly coupled.
Clare. 'Tis a marriage.
Leſſ. True, lady, and a noble precedent
Methinks for us to follow. Why ſhould theſe

Outſtrip us in our loves, that have not yet
Outgone us in our time? If we thus loſe
Our beſt and not-to-be-recovered hours
Vnprofitably ſpent, we ſhall be held
Mere truants in love's ſchool.

Clare. That is a ſtudy
In which I never ſhall ambition have
To become graduate.

Leſſ. Lady, you are ſad:
This jovial meeting puts me in a ſpirit
To be made ſuch. We two are gueſts invited
And meet by purpoſe not by accident:
Where's then a place more opportunely fit
In which we may ſolicit our own loves,
Than before this example?

Clare. In a word,
I purpoſe not to marry.

Leſſ. By your favour;
For as I ever to this preſent hour
Have ſtudied your obſervance, ſo from henceforth
I now will ſtudy plainneſs:—I have loved you
Beyond myſelf, mis-ſpended for your ſake
Many a fair hour which might have been employed
To pleaſure or to profit; have neglected
Duty to them from which my being came,
My parents, but my hopeful ſtudies moſt:
I have ſtolen time from all my choice delights
And robb'd myſelf, thinking to enrich you:

Matches I have had offer'd, ſome have told me
As fair, as rich,—I never thought them ſo:
And loſt all theſe in hope to find out you.
Reſolve me then for Chriſtian charity;
Think you an anſwer of that frozen nature
Is a ſufficient ſatisfaction for
So many more than needful ſervices?

Clare. I have ſaid, ſir.

Leſſ. Whence might this diſtaſte ariſe?
Be at leaſt ſo kind to perfect me in that.
Is it of ſome diſlike lately conceiv'd
Of this my perſon, which perhaps may grow
From calumny and ſcandal? if not that,
Some late-received melancholy in you?
If neither, your perverſe and peeviſh will,—
To which I moſt imply it?

Clare. Be it what it can or may be, thus it is;
And with this anſwer pray reſt ſatisfied.
In all theſe travels, windings, and indents,
Paths, and by-paths, which many have ſought out,
There's but one only road, and that alone,
To my fruition: which whoſo finds out
'Tis like he may enjoy me; but that failing,
I ever am mine own.

Leſſ. O, name it, ſweet!
I am already in a labyrinth,
Vntil you guide me out.

Clare. I'll to my chamber:

May you be pleaſ'd unto your mis-ſpent time
To add but ſome few minutes, by my maid
You ſhall hear further from me.

Leſſ. I'll attend you. [*Exit Clare.*

What more can I deſire than be reſolv'd
Of ſuch a long ſuſpenſe? Here's now the period
Of much expectation.

Enter Raymond, Euſtace, Lionel, and Grover.

Ray. What, you alone retir'd to privacy
Of ſuch a goodly confluence, all prepar'd
To grace the preſent nuptials!

Leſſ. I have heard ſome ſay
Men are ne'er leſs alone than when alone,
Such power hath meditation.

Euſt. O theſe choice beauties
That are this day aſſembled! but of all
Fair Miſtreſs Clare, the bride excepted ſtill,
She bears away the prize.

Lion. And worthily;
For, ſetting off her preſent melancholy,
She is without taxation.

Grov. I conceive
The cauſe of her ſo ſudden diſcontent.

Ray. 'Tis far out of my way.

Grov. I'll ſpeak it, then.
In all eſtates, profeſſions, or degrees,

In arts or ſciences, there is a kind
Of emulation; likewiſe ſo in this.
There's a maid this day married, a choice beauty:
Now Miſtreſs Clare, a virgin of like age
And fortunes correſpondent, apprehending
Time loſt in her that's in another gain'd,
May upon this—for who knows women's thoughts?—
Grow into this deep ſadneſs.

Ray. Like enough.

Leſſ. You are pleaſant, gentlemen, or elſe perhaps,
Though I know many have purſu'd her love,—

Grov. And you amongſt the reſt, with pardon, ſir;
Yet ſhe might caſt ſome more peculiar eye
On ſome that not reſpects her.

Leſſ. That's my fear,
Which you now make your ſport.

Enter Waitingwoman.

Wait. A letter, ſir.

Leſſ. From whom?

Wait. My miſtreſs. [*Gives letter.*

Leſſ. [*aſide*] She has kept her promiſe;
And I will read it, though I in the ſame
Know my own death included.

Wait. Fare you well, ſir. [*Exit.*

Leſſ. [*reads*] *Prove all thy friends, find out the beſt & neareſt;*
Kill for my ſake that friend that loves thee deareſt.

Her ſervant, nay her hand and character,
All meeting in my ruin!—Read again.
Prove all thy friends, find out the beſt and neareſt;
Kill for my ſake that friend that loves thee deareſt.
And what might that one be? 'tis a ſtrange difficulty,
And it will ask much counſel. [*Exit.*

Ray. Leſſingham
Hath left us on the ſudden.

Euſt. Sure, the occaſion
Was of that letter ſent him.

Lion. It may be
It was ſome challenge.

Grov. Challenge! never dream it:
Are ſuch things ſent by women?

Ray. 'Twere an hereſy
To conceive but ſuch a thought.

Lion. Tuſh, all the difference
Begot this day muſt be at night decided
Betwixt the bride and bridegroom.—Here both come.

Enter Woodroff, Annabel, Bonvile and Franckford.

Wood. What did you call the gentleman we met
But now in ſome diſtraction?

Bon. Leſſingham;
A moſt approv'd and noble friend of mine,
And one of our prime gueſts.

Wood. He ſeem'd to me

Somewhat in mind diſtemper'd. What concern
Thoſe private humours our ſo public mirth,
In ſuch a time of revels? Miſtreſs Clare,
I miſs her too: why, gallants, have you ſuffer'd her
Thus to be loſt amongſt you?

Anna. Dinner done,
Vnknown to any, ſhe retir'd herſelf.

Wood. Sick of the maid perhaps, becauſe ſhe ſees
You, miſtreſs bride, her ſchool and playfellow,
So ſuddenly turn'd wife.

Franck. 'Twas ſhrewdly gueſſ'd.

Wood. Go find her out.—Fie, gentlemen, within
The muſic plays unto the ſilent walls,
And no man there to grace it: when I was young,
At ſuch a meeting I have ſo beſtirr'd me
Till I have made the pale green-ſickneſs girls
Bluſh like the ruby, and drop pearls apace
Down from their ivory foreheads; in thoſe days
I have cut capers thus high. Nay, in, gentlemen,
And ſingle out the ladies.

Ray. Well adviſ'd.—
Nay, miſtreſs bride, you ſhall along with us,
For without you all's nothing.

Anna. Willingly,
With maſter bridegroom's leave.

Bon. O my beſt joy,
This day I am your ſervant.

Wood. True, this day;

She his, her whole life after,—ſo it ſhould be;
Only this day a groom ſo do her ſervice,
For which, the full remainder of his age,
He may write maſter. I have done it yet,
And ſo, I hope, ſtill ſhall.—Come, we are miſſ'd
Among the younger fry: gravity oftimes
Becomes the ſports of youth, eſpecially
At ſuch ſolemnities; and it were ſin
Not in our age to ſhow what we have bin. [*Exeunt.*

Scene 2.

Enter Leſſingham, ſad, with a letter in his hand.

Leſſ. Amicitia nihil dedit Natura maius nec rarius:
So ſaith my author. If then powerful Nature
In all her bounties ſhower'd upon mankind,
Found none more rare and precious than this one
That we call Friendſhip, O, to what a monſter
Would this trans-ſhape me,—to be made that he
To violate ſuch goodneſs! To kill any,
Had been a ſad injunction; but a friend!
Nay, of all friends the moſt approv'd! a task
Hell, till this day, could never parallel.
And yet this woman has a power of me
Beyond all virtue,—virtue! almoſt grace.
What might her hidden purpoſe be in this,

Vnleſs ſhe apprehend ſome fantaſy,
That no ſuch thing has being, and as kindred
And claims to crowns are worn out of the world,
So the name friend? 't may be 'twas her conceit.
I have tried thoſe that have profeſſed much
For coin, nay, ſometimes, ſlighter courteſies,
Yet found them cold enough: ſo, perhaps, ſhe;
Which makes her thus opinion'd. If in the former
And therefore better days 'twas held ſo rare,
Who knows but in theſe laſt and worſer times
It may be now with Juſtice baniſh'd th' earth?
I'm full of thoughts, and this my troubled breaſt
Diſtemper'd with a thouſand fantaſies.
Something I muſt reſolve. I'll firſt make proof
If ſuch a thing there be; which having found,
'Twixt love and friendſhip 'twill be a brave fight
To prove in man which claims the greateſt right.

Enter Raymond, Euſtace, Lionel, and Grover.

Ray. What, Maſter Leſſingham!
You that were wont to be compoſ'd of mirth,
All ſpirit and fire, alacrity itſelf,
Like the luſtre of a late-bright-ſhining ſun,
Now wrapt in clouds and darkneſs!

Lion. Prithee, be merry;
Thy dulneſs ſads the half part of the houſe
And deads that ſpirit which thou waſt wont to quicken

And, half-ſpent, to give life to.

Leſſ. Gentlemen,
Such as have cauſe for ſport, I ſhall wiſh ever
To make of it the preſent benefit
While it exiſts; content is ſtill ſhort-breath'd:
When it was mine, I did ſo; if now yours,
I pray make your beſt uſe on't.

Lion. Riddles and paradoxes:
Come, come, ſome crotchet's come into thy pate,
And I will know the cauſe on't.

Grov. So will I,
Or, I proteſt, ne'er leave thee.

Leſſ. 'Tis a buſineſs
Proper to myſelf, one that concerns no ſecond.

Grov. How's that! not a friend?

Leſſ. Why, is there any ſuch?

Grov. Do you queſtion that? what do you take me for?

Euſt. Ay, ſir, or me? 'Tis many months ago
Since we betwixt us interchang'd that name,
And, of my part, ne'er broken.

Lion. Troth, nor mine.

Ray. If you make queſtion of a friend, I pray
Number not me the laſt in your account,
That would be crown'd in your opinion firſt.

Leſſ. You all ſpeak nobly; but amongſt you all
Can ſuch a one be found?

Ray. Not one amongſt us
But would be proud to wear the character

Of noble friendſhip: in the name of which
And of all us here preſent, I entreat,
Expoſe to us the grief that troubles you.
Leſſ. I ſhall, and briefly. If ever gentleman
Sunk beneath ſcandal, or his reputation,
Never to be recover'd, ſuffer'd, and
For want of one whom I may call a friend,
Then mine is now in danger.
Ray. I'll redeem 't,
Though with my life's dear hazard.
Euſt. I pray, ſir,
Be to us open-breaſted.
Leſſ. Then 'tis thus.
There is to be perform'd a monomachy,
Combat, or duel,—time, place, and weapon
Agreed betwixt us. Had it touch'd myſelf
And myſelf only, I had then been happy;
But I by compoſition am engag'd
To bring with me my ſecond, and he too
Not, as the law of combat is, to ſtand
Aloof and ſee fair play, bring off his friend,
But to engage his perſon: both muſt fight,
And either of them dangerous.
Euſt. Of all things
I do not like this fighting.
Leſſ. Now, gentlemen,
Of this ſo great a courteſy I am
At this inſtant merely deſtitute.

Ray. The time?

Leſſ. By eight o'clock to-morrow.

Ray. How unhappily
Things may fall out! I am juſt at that hour,
Vpon ſome late-conceived diſcontents,
To atone me to my father; otherwiſe
Of all the reſt you had commanded me
Your ſecond and your ſervant.

Lion. Pray, the place?

Leſſ. Calais-ſands.

Lion. It once was fatal to a friend of mine
And a near kinſman; for which I vow'd then,
And deeply too, never to ſee that ground:
But if it had been elſewhere, one of them
Had before nine been worms'-meat.

Grov. What's the weapon?

Leſſ. Single-ſword.

Grov. Of all that you could name,
A thing I never practiſ'd: had it been
Rapier, or that and poniard, where men uſe
Rather ſleight than force, I had been then your man.
Being young, I ſtrain'd the ſinews of my arm;
Since then to me 'twas never ſerviceable.

Euſt. In truth, ſir, had it been a money-matter,
I could have ſtood your friend; but as for fighting,
I was ever out at that.

Leſſ. Well, farewell, gentlemen.

[*Exeunt Raymond, Euſtace, Lionel, and Grover.*

But where's the friend in all this? Tuſh, ſhe's wiſe,
And knows there's no ſuch thing beneath the moon:
I now applaud her judgment.

Enter Bonvile.

Bon. Why, how now, friend! This diſcontent, which now
Is ſo unſeaſon'd, makes me queſtion what
I ne'er durſt doubt before, your love to me:
Doth it proceed from envy of my bliſs,
Which this day crowns me with? or have you been
A ſecret rival in my happineſs,
And grieve to ſee me owner of thoſe joys
Which you could wiſh your own?

Leſſ. Baniſh ſuch thoughts,
Or you ſhall wrong the trueſt faithful friendſhip
Man e'er could boaſt of. O, mine honour, ſir!
'Tis that which makes me wear this crown of ſorrow:
Were that free from the power of calumny,—
But pardon me, that being now a-dying,
Which is ſo near to man, if part we cannot
With pleaſant looks.

Bon. Do but ſpeak the burden,
And I proteſt to take it off from you
And lay it on myſelf.

Leſſ. 'Twere a requeſt
Impudence without bluſhing could not ask,
It bears with it ſuch injury.

Bon. Yet muſt I know't.

Leſſ. Receive it then:—but I entreat you, ſir,
Not to imagine that I apprehend
A thought to further my intent by you;
From you 'tis leaſt ſuſpected:—'twas my fortune
To entertain a quarrel with a gentleman,
The field betwixt us challeng'd, place and time,
And theſe to be perform'd not without ſeconds:
I have relied on many ſeeming friends,
But cannot bleſs my memory with one
Dares venture in my quarrel.

Bon. Is this all?

Leſſ. It is enough to make all temperature
Convert to fury. Sir, my reputation,
The life and ſoul of honour, is at ſtake,
In danger to be loſt; the word of coward
Still printed in the name of Leſſingham.

Bon. Not while there is a Bonvile. May I live poor
And die deſpiſ'd, not having one ſad friend
To wait upon my hearſe, if I ſurvive
The ruin of that honour! Sir, the time?

Leſſ. Above all ſpare me that, for that once known
You'll cancel this your promiſe and unſay
Your friendly proffer; neither can I blame you:
Had you confirm'd it with a thouſand oaths
The heavens would look with mercy, not with juſtice,
On your offence, ſhould you infringe them all.
Soon after ſun-riſe, upon Calais-ſands,

To-morrow we ſhould meet: now to defer
Time one half-hour, I ſhould but forfeit all.
But, ſir, of all men living, this, alas,
Concerns you leaſt; for ſhall I be the man
To rob you of this night's felicity,
And make your bride a widow, her ſoft bed
No witneſs of thoſe joys this night expects?

Bon. I ſtill prefer my friend before my pleaſure,
Which is not loſt for ever, but adjourn'd
For more mature employment.

Leſſ. Will you go, then?

Bon. I am reſolv'd I will.

Leſſ. And inſtantly?

Bon. With all the ſpeed celerity can make.

Leſſ. You do not weigh thoſe inconveniences
This action meets with: your departure hence
Will breed a ſtrange diſtraction in your friends,
Diſtruſt of love in your fair virtuous bride,
Whoſe eyes perhaps may never more be bleſſ'd
With your dear ſight, ſince you may meet a grave,
And that not 'mongſt your noble anceſtors
But amongſt ſtrangers, almoſt enemies.

Bon. This were enough to ſhake a weak reſolve;
It moves not me. Take horſe as ſecretly
As you well may: my groom ſhall make mine ready
With all ſpeed poſſible, unknown to any.

Leſſ. But, ſir, the bride.

Enter Annabel.

Anna. Did you not ſee the key that's to unlock
My carcanet and bracelets? now, in troth,
I am afraid 'tis loſt.
Bon. No, ſweet, I ha't;
I found it lie at random in your chamber,
And knowing you would miſs it, laid it by:
'Tis ſafe, I warrant you.
Anna. Then my fear's paſt:
But till you give it back, my neck and arms
Are ſtill your priſoners.
Bon. But you ſhall find
They have a gentle gaoler.
Anna. So I hope.
Within you're much inquir'd of.
Bon. Sweet, I follow. [*Exit Annabel.*] Dover—
Leſſ. Yes, that's the place.
Bon. If you be there before me, hire a bark:
I ſhall not fail to meet you. [*Exit.*
Leſſ. Was ever known
A man ſo miſerably bleſſ'd as I?
I have no ſooner found the greateſt good
Man in this pilgrimage of life can meet,
But I muſt make the womb where 'twas conceiv'd
The tomb to bury it, and the firſt hour it lives
The laſt it muſt breathe. Yet there is a fate
That ſways and governs above women's hate.

Act II. Scene 1.

Enter Rochfield.

Roch. A younger brother; 'tis a poor calling;
Though not unlawful, very hard to live on:
The elder fool inherits all the lands,
And we that follow, legacies of wit,
And get 'em when we can too. Why ſhould law,
If we be lawful and legitimate,
Leave us without an equal divident?
Or why compels it not our fathers elſe
To ceaſe from getting, when they want to give?
No, ſure, our mothers will ne'er agree to that;
They love to groan, although the gallows echo
And groan together for us: from the firſt
We travel forth, t'other's our journey's end.
I muſt forward. To beg is out of my way,
And borrowing is out of date. The old road,
The old high-way, 't muſt be, and I am in't:
The place will ſerve for a young beginner,
For this is the firſt day I ſet ope ſhop.
Succeſs, then, ſweet Laverna! I have heard
That thieves adore thee for a deity:

I would not purchaſe by thee but to eat;
And 'tis too churliſh to deny me meat.—
Soft! here may be a booty.

Enter Annabel and a Servant.

Anna. Horſ'd, ſay'ſt thou?
Serv. Yes, miſtreſs, with Leſſingham.
Anna. Alack, I know not what to doubt or fear!
I know not well whether't be well or ill:
But, ſure, it is no cuſtom for the groom
To leave his bride upon the nuptial day.
I am ſo young and ignorant a ſcholar—
Yes, and it proves ſo; I talk away perhaps
That might be yet recover'd. Prithee, run:
The fore-path may advantage thee to meet 'em,
Or the ferry, which is not two miles before,
May trouble 'em until thou com'ſt in ken;
And if thou doſt, prithee enforce thy voice
To overtake thine eyes, cry out, and crave
For me but one word 'fore his departure;
I will not ſtay him, ſay, beyond his pleaſure
Nor rudely ask the cauſe, if he be willing
To keep it from me. Charge him by all the love—
But I ſtay thee too long: run, run.
Serv. If I had wings, I would ſpread 'em now, miſtreſs.
Anna. I'll make the beſt ſpeed after that I can;
Yet I'm not well acquainted with the path:

My fears, I fear me, will miſguide me too. [*Exit.*

Roch. There's good movables,
I perceive, whate'er the ready coin be:
Whoever owns her, ſhe's mine now; the next ground
Has a moſt pregnant hollow for the purpoſe. [*Exit.*

Scene 2.

Enter Servant, who runs over, and exit: then enter Annabel; after her, Rochfield.

Anna. I'm at a doubt already where I am.

Roch. I'll help you, miſtreſs: well overtaken.

Anna. Defend me goodneſs!—What are you?

Roch. A man.

Anna. An honeſt man, I hope.

Roch. In ſome degrees hot, not altogether cold
So far as rank poiſon, yet dangerous
As I may be dreſſ'd: I am an honeſt thief.

Anna. Honeſt and thief hold ſmall affinity;
I never heard they were akin before:
Pray heaven I find it now!

Roch. I tell you my name.

Anna. Then, honeſt thief, ſince you have taught me ſo,
For I'll enquire no other, uſe me honeſtly.

Roch. Thus, then, I'll uſe you. Firſt, to prove me honeſt,

I will not violate your chaſtity
(That's no part yet of my profeſſion),
Be you wife or virgin.

Anna. I am both, ſir.

Roch. This then it ſeems ſhould be your wedding-day
And theſe the hours of interim, to keep you
In that double ſtate: come then I'll be brief,
For I'll not hinder your deſired hymen.
You have about you ſome ſuperfluous toys
Which my lank hungry pockets would contain
With much more profit and more privacy;
You have an idle chain which keeps your neck
A priſoner; a manacle, I take it,
About your wriſt too. If theſe prove emblems
Of the combined hemp to halter mine,
The Fates take their pleaſure! theſe are ſet down
To be your ranſom, and there the thief is prov'd.

Anna. I will confeſs both, and the laſt forget.
You ſhall be only honeſt in this deed:
Pray you take it; I entreat you to it,
And then you ſteal them not.

Roch. You may deliver them.

Anna. Indeed I cannot. If you obſerve ſir,
They are both lock'd about me, and the key
I have not: haply you are furniſhed
With ſome inſtrument that may unlooſe them.

Roch. No in troth lady; I am but a freſhman;
I never read further than this book you ſee,

And this very day is my beginning too:
Theſe picking-laws I am to ſtudy yet.
Anna. O do not ſhow me that ſir, 'tis too frightful!
Good, hurt me not, for I do yield them freely:
Vſe but your hands; perhaps their ſtrength will ſerve
To tear them from me without much detriment:
Somewhat I will endure.
Roch. Well, ſweet lady,
You're the beſt patient for a young phyſician
That I think e'er was practiſ'd on. I'll uſe you
As gently as I can, as I'm an honeſt thief.
No? will't not do? Do I hurt you, lady?
Anna. Not much ſir.
Roch. I'd be loth at all. I cannot do't.
Anna. Nay then, you ſhall not ſir. You a thief
[*She draws his ſword.*
And guard yourſelf no better? no further read?
Yet out in your own book? a bad clerk, are you not?
Roch. Ay, by Saint Nicholas:—lady, ſweet lady,—
Anna. Sir, I have now a maſculine vigour
And will redeem myſelf with purchaſe too.
What money have you?
Roch. Not a croſs, by this fooliſh hand of mine.
Anna. No money? 'twere pity then to take this from thee;
I know thou'lt uſe me ne'er the worſe for this;
Take it again, I know not how to uſe it:
A frown had taken't from me, which thou hadſt not.
And now hear and believe me,—on my knees

I make the proteſtation—forbear
To take what violence and danger muſt
Diſſolve, if I forego them now. I do aſſure
You would not ſtrike my head off for my chain,
Nor my hand for this: how to deliver them
Otherwiſe, I know not. Accompany
Me back unto my houſe, 'tis not far off:
By all the vows which this day I have tied
Vnto my wedded huſband, the honour
Yet equal with my cradle-purity,
(If you will tax me,) by the hopèd joys,
The bleſſings of the bed, poſterity,
Or what aught elſe by woman may be pledg'd,
I will deliver you in ready coin
The full and dear'ſt eſteem of what you crave.

Roch. Ha! ready money is the prize I look for:
It walks without ſuſpicion any where,
When chains and jewels may be ſtay'd and call'd
Before the conſtable: but—

Anna. But! can you doubt?
You ſaw I gave you my advantage up:
Did you e'er think a woman to be true?

Roch. Thought's free: I have heard of ſome few, lady,
Very few indeed.

Anna. Will you add one more to your belief?

Roch. They were fewer than the articles of my belief,
Therefore I have room for you, and will believe you.
Stay; you'll ranſom your jewels with ready coin;

So may you do, and then diſcover me.

Anna. Shall I reiterate the vows I made
To this injunction, or new ones coin?

Roch. Neither; I'll truſt you: if you do deſtroy
A thief that never yet did robbery,
Then farewell I, and mercy fall upon me!
I knew one once fifteen years courtier old,
And he was buried ere he took a bribe:
It may be my caſe in the worſer way.
Come, you know your path back.

Anna. Yes, I ſhall guide you.

Roch. Your arm: I'll lead with greater dread than will;
Nor do you fear, though in thief's handling ſtill. [*Exeunt.*

Scene 3.

Enter Woodroff, Franckford, Raymond, Euſtace, Grover, Lionel, and Clare.

Wood. This wants a precedent, that a bridegroom
Should ſo diſcreet and decently obſerve
His forms, poſtures, all cuſtomary rites
Belonging to the table, and then hide himſelf
From his expected wages in the bed.

Franck. Let this be forgotten too, that it remain not
A firſt example.

Ray. Keep it amongſt us,

Left it beget too much unfruitful ſorrow.
Moſt likely 'tis that love to Leſſingham
Hath faſtened on him, we all denied.
Euſt. 'Tis more certain than likely: I know 'tis ſo.
Grov. Conceal then: the event may be well enough.
Wood. The bride my daughter, ſhe is hidden too;
This laſt hour ſhe hath not been ſeen with us.
Ray. Perhaps they are together.
Euſt. And then we make too ſtrict an inquiſition:
Vnder correction of fair modeſty,
Should they be ſtol'n away to bed together
What would you ſay to that?
Wood. I would ſay, ſpeed them well;
And if no worſe news comes I'll never weep for't.
Clare. [*aſide*] I fear myſelf moſt guilty for the abſence
Of the bridegroom. What our wills will do
With over-raſh and headlong peeviſhneſs
To bring our calm diſcretions to repentance!
Leſſingham's miſtaken, quite out o'the way
Of my purpoſe too.
Wood. So, ſo;
There's ſome good luck yet, the bride's in ſight again.

Enter Annabel, and Rochfield.

Anna. Father, and gentlemen all, beſeech you
Entreat this gentleman with all courteſy:
He is a loving kinſman of my Bonvile's,

That kindly came to gratulate our wedding;
But as the day falls out, you ſee alone
I perſonate both groom and bride; only
Your help to make this welcome better.

Wood. Moſt dearly.

Ray. To all, aſſure you, ſir.

Wood. But where's the bridegroom, girl?
We are all at a nonplus here, at a ſtand,
Quite out; the muſic ceaſ'd, and dancing ſurbated,
Not a light heel amongſt us; my couſin Clare too
As cloudy here as on a waſhing-day.

Clare. It is becauſe you will not dance with me;
I ſhould then ſhake it off.

Anna. 'Tis I have cauſe
To be the ſad one now, if any be:
But I have queſtion'd with my meditations,
And they have render'd well and comfortably
To the worſt fear I found. Suppoſe this day
He had long ſince appointed to his foe
To meet and fetch a reputation from him,
Which is the deareſt jewel unto man:
Say he do fight, I know his goodneſs ſuch
That all thoſe powers that love it are his guard
And ill cannot betide him.

Wood. Prithee peace;
Thou'lt make us all cowards to hear a woman
Inſtruct ſo valiantly,—Come, the muſic!
I'll dance myſelf rather than thus put down:

What! I am rife a little yet.

Anna. Only this gentleman
Pray you be free in welcome to: I tell you
I was in a fear when firſt I ſaw him.

Roch. [*aſide*] Ha! ſhe'll tell.

Anna. I had quite loſt my way in
My firſt amazement; but he ſo fairly came
To my recovery, in his kind conduct
Gave me ſuch loving comforts to my fears;
'Twas he inſtructed me in what I ſpake,
And many better than I have told you yet;
You ſhall hear more anon.

Roch. [*aſide*] So, ſhe will out with't.

Anna. I muſt, I ſee, ſupply both places ſtill.—
Come, when I have ſeen you back to your pleaſure,
I will return to you, ſir: we muſt diſcourſe
More of my Bonvile yet.

Omnes. A noble bride, faith.

Clare. [*aſide.*] You have your wiſhes and you may be merry:
Mine have over-gone me. [*Exeunt all except Rochfield.*

Roch. It is the trembling'ſt trade to be a thief!
H'ad need have all the world bound to the peace,
Beſides the buſhes and the vanes of houſes:
Every thing that moves, he goes in fear of's life on;
A fur-gown'd cat, an meet her in the night,
She ſtares with a conſtable's eye upon him,
And every dog a watchman; a black cow
And a calf with a white face after her

Shows like a ſurly juſtice and his clerk;
And if the baby go but to the bag,
'Tis ink and paper for a mittimus.
Sure I ſhall never thrive on't; and it may be
I ſhall need take no care,—I may be now
At my journey's end, or but the goal's diſtance,
And ſo to t'other place. I truſt a woman
With a ſecret worth a hanging; is that well?
I could find in my heart to run away yet:
And that were baſe too, to run from a woman:
I can lay claim to nothing but her vows,
And they ſhall ſtrengthen me.

Re-enter Annabel.

Anna. See, ſir, my promiſe:
[*Giving money*] There's twenty pieces, the full value, I vow,
Of what they coſt.

Roch. Lady, do not trap me
Like a ſumpter-horſe, and then ſpur-gall me
Till I break my wind. If the conſtable
Be at the door, let his fair ſtaff appear:
Perhaps I may corrupt him with this gold.

Anna. Nay, then, if you miſtruſt me,—Father, gentlemen,
Maſter Raymond, Euſtace!

Re-enter Woodroff, Franckford, Raymond, Euſtace, Grover, Lionel, and Clare, with a Sailor.

Wood. How now! what's the matter girl?

Anna. For ſhame, will you bid your kinſman welcome?
No one but I will lay a hand on him:
Leave him alone, and all a-revelling!

Wood. O, is that it?—Welcome, welcome heartily!
I thought the bridegroom had been return'd.—But
I have news, Annabel; this fellow brought it.—
Welcome ſir! why, you tremble methinks, ſir.

Anna. Some agony of anger 'tis, believe it,
His entertainment is ſo cold and feeble.

Ray. Pray be cheer'd, ſir.

Roch. I'm wondrous well ſir; 'twas the gentleman's miſtake.

Wood. 'Twas my hand ſhook belike then; you muſt pardon
Age, I was ſtiffer once. But as I was ſaying,
I ſhould by promiſe ſee the ſea to-morrow
('Tis meant for phyſic) as low as Lee or Margate:
I have a veſſel riding forth, gentlemen,
'Tis call'd the God-ſpeed too,
Though I ſay't, a brave one, well and richly fraughted!
And I can tell you ſhe carries a letter of mart
In her mouth too, and twenty roaring boys
On both ſides on her, ſtarboard and larboard.
What ſay you now, to make you all adventurers?
You ſhall have fair dealing, that I'll promiſe you.

Ray. A very good motion, ſir: I begin;
[*Giving money*] There's my ten pieces.

Euſt. [*giving money*] I ſecond them with theſe.

Grov. [*giving money*] My ten in the third place.

Roch. [*gives money*] And, ſir, if you refuſe not a proffer'd love,
Take my ten pieces with you too.

Wood. Yours above all the reſt, ſir.

Anna. Then make them above, venture ten more.

Roch. Alas, lady, 'tis a younger brother's portion,
And all in one bottom!

Anna. At my encouragement, ſir:
Your credit, if you want, ſhall not ſit down
Vnder that ſum return'd.

Roch. With all my heart, lady.—[*giving money*] There, ſir.
[*Aſide*] So, ſhe has fiſh'd for her gold back, and caught it;
I am no thief now.

Wood. I ſhall make here a pretty aſſurance.

Roch. Sir, I ſhall have a ſuit to you.

Wood. You are likely to obtain it then, ſir.

Roch. That I may keep you company to ſea
And attend you back: I am a little travell'd.

Wood. And heartily thank you too, ſir.

Anna. Why that's well ſaid.—
Pray you be merry: though your kinſman be abſent,
I am here, the worſt part of him; yet that ſhall ſerve
To give you welcome: to-morrow may ſhow you
What this night will not; and be full aſſur'd,
Vnleſs your twenty pieces be ill-lent
Nothing ſhall give you cauſe of diſcontent.
[*Giving money*] There's ten more, ſir.

Roch. [*aſide*] Why ſhould I fear? Foutre on't!
I will be merry now, ſpite of the hangman. [*Exeunt.*

Act III. Scene 1.

Enter Leſſingham and Bonvile.

Bon. We are firſt i'the field: I think your enemy
Is ſtay'd at Dover or ſome other port,
We hear not of his landing.
Leſſ. I am confident
He is come over.
Bon. You look, methinks, freſh-colour'd.
Leſſ. Like a red morning, friend, that ſtill foretells
A ſtormy day to follow: but methinks,
Now I obſerve your face, that you look pale;
There's death in't already.
Bon. I could chide your error.
Do you take me for a coward? A coward
Is not his own friend, much leſs can he be
Another man's. Know ſir, I am come hither
To inſtruct you, by my generous example,
To kill your enemy, whoſe name as yet
I never queſtion'd.
Leſſ. Nor dare I name him yet
For diſheartening you.
Bon. I do begin to doubt

The goodneſs of your quarrel.

Leſſ. Now you have't;
For I proteſt that I muſt fight with one
From whom, in the whole courſe of our acquaintance,
I never did receive the leaſt injury.

Bon. It may be the forgetful wine begot
Some ſudden blow, and thereupon this challenge.
Howe'er you are engag'd; and, for my part,
I will not take your courſe, my unlucky friend,
To ſay your conſcience grows pale and heartleſs
Maintaining a bad cauſe. Fight as lawyers plead,
Who gain the beſt of reputation
When they can fetch a bad cauſe ſmoothly off:
You are in, and muſt through.

Leſſ. O my friend,
The nobleſt ever man had! When my fate
Threw me upon this buſineſs, I made trial
Of divers had profeſſ'd to me much love,
And found their friendſhip, like the effects that kept
Our company together, wine and riot:
Giddy and ſinking I had found them oft,
Brave ſeconds at pluralities of healths;
But when it came to the proof, my gentlemen
Appear'd to me as promiſing and failing
As cozening lotteries. But then I found
This jewel worth a thouſand counterfeits:
I did but name my engagement, and you flew
Vnto my ſuccour with that cheerfulneſs

As a great general haſtes to a battle,
When that the chief of the adverſe part
Is a man glorious and of ample fame;
You left your bridal bed to find your death-bed;
And herein you moſt nobly expreſſ'd
That the affection 'tween two loyal friends
Is far beyond the love of man to woman
And is more near allied to eternity.
What better friend's part could be ſhow'd i'the world!
It tranſcends all: my father gave me life,
But you ſtand by my honour when 'tis falling
And nobly underprop it with your ſword.
But now you have done me all this ſervice,
How, how ſhall I requite this? how return
My grateful recompenſe for all this love?
For it am I come hither with full purpoſe
To kill you.

Bon. Ha!

Leſſ. Yes, I have no oppoſite i'the world but
Yourſelf: [*giving letter*] there, read the warrant for your death.

Bon. 'Tis a woman's hand.

Leſſ. And 'tis a bad hand too:
The moſt of 'em ſpeak fair, write foul, mean worſe.

Bon. Kill me! Away, you jeſt.

Leſſ. Such jeſt as your ſharp-witted gallants uſe
To utter, and loſe their friends. Read there how I
Am fetter'd in a woman's proud command:
I do love madly, and muſt do madly.

Deadlieſt hellebore or vomit of a toad
Is qualified poiſon to a woman's malice.
Bon. [*reading*] *And kill that friend.* Strange!
Leſſ. You may ſee, ſir,
Although the tenure by which land was held
In villanage be quite extinct in England,
Yet you have women there at this day living
Make a number of ſlaves.
Bon. *And kill that friend!*
She mocks you, upon my life, ſhe does equivocate:
Her meaning is, you cheriſh in your breaſt
Either ſelf-love or pride, as your beſt friend,
And ſhe wiſhes you'd kill that.
Leſſ. Sure, her command
Is more bloody: for ſhe loathes me, and has put,
As ſhe imagines, this impoſſible task,
For ever to be quit and free from me:
But ſuch is the violence of my affection
That I muſt undergo it. Draw your ſword
And guard yourſelf: though I fight in fury
I ſhall kill you in cold blood, for I proteſt
'Tis done in heart-ſorrow.
Bon. I'll not fight with you,
For I have much advantage: the truth is,
I wear a privy coat.
Leſſ. Prithee put it off, then,
If thou beeſt manly.
Bon. The defence I mean is the juſtice of my cauſe;

That would guard me and fly to thy deſtruction.
What confidence thou wear'ſt in a bad cauſe!
I am likely to kill thee if I fight;
And then you fail to effect your miſtreſs' bidding
Or to enjoy the fruit of't. I have ever
Wiſhed thy happineſs, and vow I now
So much affect it, in compaſſion
Of my friend's ſorrow: make thy way to it.

Leſſ. That were a cruel murder.

Bon. Believe't, 'tis ne'er intended otherwiſe,
When 'tis a woman's bidding.

Leſſ. O the neceſſity of my fate!

Bon. You ſhed tears.

Leſſ. And yet muſt on in my cruel purpoſe:
A judge, methinks, looks lovelieſt when he weeps
Pronouncing of death's ſentence. How I ſtagger
In my reſolve! Guard thee, for I came hither
To do and not to ſuffer. Wilt not yet
Be perſuaded to defend thee? turn the point,
Advance it from the ground above thy head,
And let it underprop thee otherwiſe
In a bold reſiſtance.

Bon. Stay. Thy injunction was
Thou ſhouldſt kill thy friend.

Leſſ. It was.

Bon. Obſerve me.
He wrongs me moſt ought to offend me leaſt,
And they that ſtudy man ſay of a friend

There's nothing in the world that's harder found,
Nor ſooner loſt. Thou cam'ſt to kill thy friend,
And thou mayſt brag thou haſt done't; for here for ever
All friendſhip dies between us, and my heart,
For bringing forth any effects of love,
Shall be as barren to thee as this ſand
We tread on, cruel and inconſtant as
The ſea that beats upon this beach. We now
Are ſevered: thus haſt thou ſlain thy friend
And ſatisfied what the witch, thy miſtreſs, bade thee.
Go, and report that thou haſt ſlain thy friend.

Leſſ. I am ſerv'd right.

Bon. And now that I do ceaſe to be thy friend
I will fight with thee as thine enemy:
I came not over idly to do nothing.

Leſſ. O friend!

Bon. Friend!
The naming of that word ſhall be the quarrel.
What do I know but that thou lov'ſt my wife
And feign'dſt this plot to divide me from her bed,
And that this letter here is counterfeit?
Will you advance, ſir?

Leſſ. Not a blow:
'Twould appear ill in either of us to fight,
In you unmanly; for believe it ſir,
You have diſarm'd me already, done away
All power of reſiſtance in me. It would ſhow
Beaſtly to wrong the dead: to me you ſay

You are dead for ever, loſt on Calais-ſands
By the cruelty of a woman. Yet remember
You had a noble friend, whoſe love to you
Shall continue after death. Shall I go over
In the ſame bark with you?

Bon. Not for yon town
Of Calais: you know 'tis dangerous living
At ſea with a dead body.

Leſſ. O, you mock me.
May you enjoy all your noble wiſhes!

Bon. And may you find a better friend than I,
And better keep him!

Scene 2.

Enter Raymond, Euſtace, Lionel, Grover, Annabel and Clare.

Lion. Whence was that letter ſent?

Anna. From Dover, ſir.

Lion. And does that ſatisfy you what was the cauſe
Of his going over?

Anna. It does: yet had he
Only ſent this, it had been ſufficient.

Ray. Why, what's that?

Anna. His will, wherein
He has eſtated me in all his land.

Euſt. He's gone to fight.
Lion. Leſſingham's ſecond, certain.
Anna. And I am loſt, loſt in't for ever.
Clare. [*aſide*] O fool Leſſingham,
Thou haſt miſtook my injunction utterly,
Vtterly miſtook it! and I am mad, ſtark mad
With my own thoughts, not knowing what event
Their going-o'er will come to. 'Tis too late
Now for my tongue to cry my heart mercy.
Would I could be ſenſeleſs till I hear
Of their return! I fear me both are loſt.
Ray. Who ſhould it be Leſſingham's gone to fight with?
Euſt. Faith, I cannot poſſibly conjecture.
Anna. Miſerable creature! a maid, a wife,
And widow in the compaſs of two days!
Ray. Are you ſad too?
Clare. I am not very well, ſir.
Ray. I muſt put life in you.
Clare. Let me go, ſir.
Ray. I do love you in ſpite of your heart.
Clare. Believe it,
There was never a fitter time to expreſs it,
For my heart has a great deal of ſpite in't.
Ray. I will diſcourſe to you fine fancies.
Clare. Fine fooleries, will you not?
Ray. By this hand, I love you and will court you.
Clare. Fie!
You can command your tongue, and I my ears

To hear you no further.

Ray. [*aſide*] On my reputation,
She's off o' the hinges ſtrangely.

Enter Woodroff, Rochfield, and a ſailor.

Wood. Daughter, good news.

Anna. What, is my husband heard of?

Wood. That's not the buſineſs: but you have a couſin
You may be mainly proud of; and I am ſorry
'Tis by your husband's kindred, not your own,
That we might boaſt to have ſo brave a man
In our alliance.

Anna. What, ſo ſoon return'd?
You have made but a ſhort voyage: howſoever
You are to me moſt welcome.

Roch. Lady, thanks:
'Tis you have made me your own creature;
Of all my being, fortunes, and poor fame,
(If I have purchaſ'd any, and of which
I no way boaſt,) next the high providence,
You have been the ſole creatreſs.

Anna. O dear couſin,
You are grateful above merit.—What occaſion
Drew you ſo ſoon from ſea?

Wood. Such an occaſion
As I may bleſs heaven for, you thank their bounty,
And all of us be joyful.

Anna. Tell us how.

Wood. Nay daughter, the diſcourſe will beſt appear
In his relation: where he fails I'll help.

Roch. Not to moleſt your patience with recital
Of every vain and needleſs circumſtance,
'Twas briefly thus. Scarce having reach'd to Margate,
Bound on our voyage, ſuddenly in view
Appear'd to us three Spaniſh men-of-war.
Theſe, having ſpied the Engliſh croſs advance,
Saluté us with a piece to have us ſtrike:
Ours, better ſpirited, and no way daunted,
At their unequal odds, though but one bottom,
Return'd them fire for fire. The fight begins,
And dreadful on the ſudden; ſtill they proffer'd
To board us, ſtill we bravely beat them off.

Wood. But, daughter, mark the event.

Roch. Sea-room we got; our ſhip being ſwift of ſail,
It help'd us much. Yet two unfortunate ſhot,
One ſtruck the captain's head off, and the other
With an unlucky ſplinter laid the maſter
Dead on the hatches: all our ſpirits then fail'd us.

Wood. Not all: you ſhall hear further, daughter.

Roch. For none was left to manage: nothing now
Was talk'd of but to yield up ſhip and goods,
And mediate for our peace.

Wood. Nay coz, proceed.

Roch. Excuſe me, I entreat you, for what's more
Hath already paſſ'd my memory.

Wood. But mine it never can.—Then he ſtood up,
And with his oratory made us again
To recollect our ſpirits, ſo late dejected.
Roch. Pray, ſir,—
Wood. I'll ſpeak 't out.—By unite conſent
Then the command was his, and 'twas his place
Now to beſtir him. Down he went below
And put the linſtocks in the gunners' hands;
They ply their ordnance bravely: then again
Vp to the decks; courage is there renew'd,
Fear now not found amongſt us. Within leſs
Than four hours' fight two of their ſhips were ſunk,
Both founder'd, and ſoon ſwallow'd. Not long after,
The third begins to wallow, lies on the lee
To ſtop her leaks: then boldly we come on,
Boarded, and took her, and ſhe's now our prize.
Sailor. Of this we were eye-witneſſes.
Wood. And many more brave boys of us beſides,
Myſelf for one. Never was, gentlemen,
A ſea-fight better manag'd.
Roch. Thanks to heaven
We have sav'd our own, damag'd the enemy,
And to our nation's glory we bring home
Honour and profit.
Wood. In which, couſin Rochfield,
You as a venturer have a double ſhare,
Beſides the name of captain, and in that
A ſecond benefit; but, moſt of all,

Way to more great employment.

Roch. [*to Annabel.*] Thus your bounty
Hath been to me a bleſſing.

Ray. Sir we are all
Indebted to your valour: this beginning
May make us of ſmall venturers to become
Hereafter wealthy merchants.

Wood. Daughter and gentlemen,
This is the man was born to make us all.
Come, enter, enter: we will in and feaſt:
He's in the bridegroom's abſence my chief gueſt.

Act IV. Scene 1.

Enter Leſſingham and Clare.

Clara. O ſir, are you return'd? I do expect
To hear ſtrange news now.
Leſſ. I have none to tell you;
I am only to relate I have done ill
At a woman's bidding; that's, I hope, no news.
Yet wherefore do I call that ill, begets
My abſolute happineſs? You now are mine,
I muſt enjoy you ſolely.
Clare. By what warrant?
Leſſ. By your own condition. I have been at Calais,
Perform'd your will, drawn my revengeful ſword,
And ſlain my neareſt and beſt friend i' the world
I had for your ſake.
Clare. Slain your friend for my ſake?
Leſſ. A moſt ſad truth.
Clare. And your beſt friend?
Leſſ. My chiefeſt.
Clare. Then of all men you are moſt miſerable:
Nor have you aught further'd your ſuit in this,
Though I enjoined you to't; for I had thought

That I had been the beſt eſteemed friend
You had i'the world.
Leſſ. Ye did not wiſh, I hope,
That I ſhould have murder'd you?
Clare. You ſhall perceive more
Of that hereafter: but I pray ſir, tell me,—
For I do freeze with expectation of it,
It chills my heart with horror till I know
What friend's blood you have ſacrific'd to your fury
And to my fatal ſport,—this bloody riddle;
Who is it you have ſlain?
Leſſ. Bonvile, the bridegroom.
Clare. Say? O, you have ſtruck him dead thorough my heart!
In being true to me you have prov'd in this
The falſeſt traitor. O, I am loſt for ever!
Yet, wherefore am I loſt? rather recover'd
From a deadly witchcraft; and upon his grave
I will not gather rue but violets
To bleſs my wedding-ſtrewings. Good ſir, tell me
Are you certain he is dead?
Leſſ. Never, never
To be recover'd.
Clare. Why, now ſir, I do love you
With an entire heart. I could dance methinks:
Never did wine or muſic ſtir in woman
A ſweeter touch of mirth. I will marry you,
Inſtantly marry you.

Leff. [*aſide.*] This woman has ſtrange changes.—You are ta'en
Strangely with his death.

Clare. I'll give the reaſon
I have to be thus ecſtaſied with joy:
Know ſir, that you have ſlain my deareſt friend
And fataleſt enemy.

Leff. Moſt ſtrange!

Clare. 'Tis true:
You have ta'en a maſs of lead from off my heart
For ever would have ſunk it in deſpair.
When you beheld me yeſterday I ſtood
As if a merchant walking on the downs
Should ſee ſome goodly veſſel of his own
Sunk 'fore his face i'the harbour; and my heart
Retain'd no more heat than a man that toils
And vainly labours to put out the flames
That burn his houſe to the bottom. I will tell you
A ſtrange concealment ſir, and till this minute
Never reveal'd, and I will tell it now
Smiling and not bluſhing. I did love that Bonvile,
Not as I ought, but as a woman might,—
That's beyond reaſon: I did dote upon him,
Though he ne'er knew of't; and beholding him
Before my face wedded unto another,
And all my intereſt in him forfeited,
I fell into deſpair; and at that inſtant
You urging your ſuit to me, and I thinking
That I had been your only friend i'the world,

I heartily did wiſh you would have kill'd
That friend yourſelf, to have ended all my ſorrow,
And had prepar'd it, that unwittingly
You ſhould have done't by poiſon.

Leſſ. Strange amazement!

Clare. The effects of a ſtrange love.

Leſſ. 'Tis a dream, ſure.

Clare. No, 'tis real ſir, believe it.

Leſſ. Would it were not!

Clare. What, ſir! you have done bravely: 'tis your miſtreſs
That tells you you have done ſo.

Leſſ. But my conſcience
Is of counſel 'gainſt you, and pleads otherwiſe.
Virtue in her paſt actions glories ſtill,
But vice throws loathèd looks on former ill.
But did you love this Bonvile?

Clare. Strangely, ſir;
Almoſt to a degree of madneſs.

Leſſ. [*aſide*] Truſt a woman!
Never henceforward: I will rather truſt
The winds which Lapland witches ſell to men.
All that they have is feign'd, their teeth, their hair,
Their bluſhes, nay, their conſcience too is feign'd:
Let them paint, load themſelves with cloth of tiſſue,
They cannot yet hide woman; that will appear
And diſgrace all. The neceſſity of my fate!
Certain this woman has bewitch'd me here,
For I cannot chooſe but love her. O, how fatal

This might have prov'd! I would it had for me!
It would not grieve me though my ſword had ſplit
His heart in ſunder; I had then deſtroy'd
One that may prove my rival. O, but then
What had my horror been, my guilt of conſcience!
I know ſome do ill at women's bidding
I'the dog-days, and repent all the winter after:
No, I account it treble happineſs
That Bonvile lives; but 'tis my chiefeſt glory
That our friendſhip is divided.

Clare. Noble friend,
Why do you talk to yourſelf?

Leff. Should you do ſo,
You'd talk to an ill woman. Fare you well,
For ever fare you well.—[*Aſide*] I will do ſomewhat
To make as fatal breach and difference
In Bonvile's love as mine: I am fix'd in't.
My melancholy and the devil ſhall faſhion it.

Clare. You will not leave me thus?

Leff. Leave you for ever:
And may my friend's blood, whom you lov'd ſo dearly,
For ever lie impoſthum'd in your breaſt,
And i' the end choke you! Woman's cruelty
This black and fatal thread hath ever ſpun;
It muſt undo, or elſe it is undone. [*Exit.*

Clare. I am every way loſt, and no means to raiſe me
But bleſſ'd repentance. What two unvalu'd jewels
Am I at once depriv'd of! Now I ſuffer

Deſervedly. There's no proſperity ſettled:
Fortune plays ever with our good or ill,
Like croſs and pile, and turns up which ſhe will.

Enter Bonvile.

Bon. Friend!

Clare. O, you are the welcom'ſt under heaven!
Leſſingham did but fright me: yet I fear
That you are hurt to danger.

Bon. Not a ſcratch.

Clare. Indeed, you look exceeding well, methinks.

Bon. I have been ſea-ſick lately, and we count
That excellent phyſic. How does my Annabel?

Clare. As well ſir as the fear of ſuch a loſs
As your eſteemed ſelf will ſuffer her.

Bon. Have you ſeen Leſſingham ſince he return'd?

Clare. He departed hence but now and left with me
A report had almoſt kill'd me.

Bon. What was that?

Clare. That he had kill'd you.

Bon. So he has.

Clare. You mock me.

Bon. He has kill'd me for a friend, for ever ſilenc'd
All amity between us. You may now
Go and embrace him, for he has fulfill'd
The purpoſe of that letter. [*Gives letter.*

Clare. O I know't.

And had you known this, which I meant to have ſent you
[*She gives him another.*
An hour 'fore you were married to your wife,
The riddle had been conſtru'd.
Bon. Strange! this expreſſes
That you did love me.
Clare. With a violent affection.
Bon. Violent indeed; for it ſeems it was your purpoſe
To have ended it in violence on your friend:
The unfortunate Leſſingham unwittingly
Should have been the executioner.
Clare. 'Tis true.
Bon. And do you love ſtill?
Clare. I may eaſily
Confeſs it, ſince my extremity is ſuch
That I muſt needs ſpeak or die.
Bon. And you would enjoy me
Though I am married?
Clare. No indeed, not I ſir:
You are to ſleep with a ſweet bed-fellow
Would knit the brow at that.
Bon. Come, come, a woman's telling truth
Makes amends for her playing falſe: you would enjoy me?
Clare. If you were a bachelor or widower,
Afore all the great ones living.
Bon. But 'tis impoſſible
To give you preſent ſatisfaction; for
My wife is young and healthful, and I like

The ſummer and the harveſt of our love,
Which yet I have not taſted of, ſo well
That, an you'll credit me, for me her days
Shall ne'er be ſhorten'd. Let your reaſon therefore
Turn you another way, and call to mind
With beſt obſervance the accompliſh'd graces
Of that brave gentleman whom late you ſent
To his deſtruction; a man ſo every way
Deſerving, no one action of his
In all his life-time e'er degraded him
From the honour he was born to. Think how obſervant
He'll prove to you in nobler requeſt that ſo
Obey'd you in a bad one; and remember
That afore you engag'd him to an act
Of horror, to the killing of his friend,
He bore his ſteerage true in every part
Led by the compaſs of a noble heart.

Clare. Why do you praiſe him thus? You ſaid but now
He was utterly loſt to you; now't appears
You are friends, elſe you'd not deliver of him
Such a worthy commendation.

Bon. You miſtake,
Vtterly miſtake that I am friends with him
In ſpeaking this good of him. To what purpoſe
Do I praiſe him? only to this fatal end,
That you might fall in love and league with him:
And what worſe office can I do i' the world
Vnto my enemy than to endeavour

By all means poſſible to marry him
Vnto a whore? and there, I think, ſhe ſtands.
Clare. Is whore a name to be belov'd? if not,
What reaſon have I ever to love that man
Puts it upon me falſely? You have wrought
Strange alteration in me: were I a man,
I would drive you with my ſword into the field
And there put my wrong to ſilence. Go, you're not worthy
To be a woman's friend in the leaſt part
That concerns honourable reputation;
For you are a liar.
Bon. I will love you now
With a noble obſervance if you will continue
This hate unto me: gather all thoſe graces,
From whence you have fall'n, yonder, where you have left them
In Leſſingham, he that muſt be your husband;
And though henceforth I ceaſe to be his friend,
I will appear his nobleſt enemy
And work reconcilement 'tween you.
Clare. No you ſhall not;
You ſhall not marry him to a ſtrumpet: for that word
I ſhall ever hate you.
Bon. And for that one deed
I ſhall ever love you. Come, convert your thoughts
To him that beſt deſerves them, Leſſingham.
It is moſt certain you have done him wrong;
But your repentance and compaſſion now
May make amends: diſperſe this melancholy,

And on that turn of Fortune's wheel depend,
When all calamities will mend or end. [*Exeunt.*

Act V. Scene 1.

Enter Rochfield and Annabel.

Roch. Believe me, I was never more ambitious
Or covetous, if I may call it ſo,
Of any fortune greater than this one,
But to behold his face.

Anna. And now's the time;
For from a much-fear'd danger, as I heard,
He's late come over.

Roch. And not ſeen you yet!
'Tis ſome unkindneſs.

Anna. You may think it ſo;
But for my part, ſir, I account it none.
What know I but ſome buſineſs of import
And weighty conſequence, more near to him
Than any formal compliment to me,
May for a time detain him? I preſume
No jealouſy can be aſperſ'd on him
For which he cannot well apology.

Roch. You are a creature every way complete,
As good a wife as woman; for whoſe ſake,
As I in duty am endear'd to you,

So ſhall I owe him ſervice.

Enter Leſſingham.

Leſſ. [*aſide*] The ways to love and crowns lie both through blood,
For in them both all lets muſt be remov'd:
It could be ſtyl'd no true ambition elſe.
I am grown big with project:—project, ſaid I?
Rather with ſudden miſchief; which, without
A ſpeedy birth, fills me with painful throes,
And I am now in labour.—Thanks, occaſion,
That giv'ſt me a fit ground to work upon!
It ſhould be Rochfield, one ſince our departure
It ſeems engrafted in this family:
Indeed the houſe's minion, ſince from the lord
To the loweſt groom all with unite conſent
Speak him ſo largely; nor, as it appears
By this their private conference, is he grown
Leaſt in the bride's opinion,—a foundation
On which I will erect a brave revenge.

Anna. Sir, what kind offices lie in your way
To do for him, I ſhall be thankful for,
And reckon them mine own.

Roch. In acknowledgement
I kiſs your hand: ſo with a gratitude
Never to be forgot I take my leave.

Anna. I mine of you, with hourly expectation

Of a long-look'd-for husband.

Roch. May it thrive
According to your wiſhes! [*Exit Annabel.*

Leſſ. [*aſide*] Now's my turn.—
Without offence ſir, may I beg your name?

Roch. 'Tis that I never yet denied to any,
Nor will to you that ſeem a gentleman;
'Tis Rochfield.

Leſſ. Rochfield! You are then the man
Whoſe nobleneſs, virtue, valour, and good parts
Have voic'd you loud: Dover, and Sandwich, Margate,
And all the coaſt is full of you:
But more, as an eye-witneſs of all these,
And with moſt truth, the maſter of this houſe
Hath given them large expreſſions.

Roch. Therein his love
Exceeded much my merit.

Leſſ. That's your modeſty.
Now I, as one that goodneſs love in all men,
And honouring that which is but found in few,
Deſire to know you better.

Roch. Pray your name?

Leſſ. Leſſingham.

Roch. A friend to Maſter Bonvile?

Leſſ. In the number
Of thoſe which he eſteems moſt dear to him
He reckons me not laſt.

Roch. So I have heard.

Leff. Sir, you have cauſe to bleſs the lucky planet
Beneath which you were born; 'twas a bright ſtar
And then ſhin'd clear upon you: for as you
Are every way well-parted, ſo I hold you
In all deſigns mark'd to be fortunate.

Roch. Pray do not ſtretch your love to flattery;
It may call it then in queſtion: grow, I pray you,
To ſome particulars.

Leff. I have obſerv'd
But late your parting with the virgin bride,
And therein ſome affection.

Roch. How!

Leff. With pardon,—
In this I ſtill applaud your happineſs
And praiſe the bleſſed influence of your ſtars:
For how can it be poſſible that ſhe,
Vnkindly left upon the bridal day
And diſappointed of thoſe nuptial ſweets
That night expected, but ſhould take the occaſion
So fairly offer'd? nay, and ſtand excuſ'd,
As well in deteſtation of a ſcorn
Scarce in a husband heard of, as ſelecting
A gentleman in all things ſo complete
To do her thoſe neglected offices
Her youth and beauty juſtly challengeth?

Roch. [*aſide*] Some plot to wrong the bride; and I now
Will marry craft with cunning: if he'll bite,
I'll give him line to play on.—Were't your caſe,

You being young as I am, would you intermit
So fair and ſweet occaſion?
Yet miſconceive me not, I do entreat you,
To think I can be of that eaſy wit
Or of that malice to defame a lady,
Were ſhe ſo kind as to expoſe herſelf;
Nor is ſhe ſuch a creature.

Leff. [*aſide*] On this foundation
I can build higher ſtill.—Sir, I believe't.
I hear you two call couſins: comes your kindred
By the Woodroffs or the Bonviles?

Roch. From neither; 'tis a word of courteſy
Late interchang'd betwixt us; otherwiſe
We are foreign as two ſtrangers.

Leff. [*aſide*] Better ſtill.

Roch. I would not have you grow too inward with me
Vpon ſo ſmall a knowledge: yet to ſatisfy you,
And in ſome kind too to delight myſelf,
Thoſe bracelets and the carcanet ſhe wears
She gave me once.

Leff. They were the firſt and ſpecial tokens paſſ'd
Betwixt her and her husband.

Roch. 'Tis confeſſ'd;
What I have ſaid, I have ſaid. Sir, you have power
Perhaps to wrong me or to injure her:
This you may do; but, as you are a gentleman,
I hope you will do neither.

Leff. Truſt upon't. [*Exit Rochfield.*

If I drown, I will ſink ſome along with me;
For of all miſeries I hold that chief,
Wretched to be when none coparts our grief.
Here's another anvil to work on: I muſt now
Make this my maſter-piece, for your old foxes
Are ſeldom ta'en in ſpringes.

Enter Woodroff.

Wood. What, my friend!
You are happily return'd; and yet I want
Somewhat to make it perfect. Where's your friend,
My ſon-in-law?
Leſſ. O ſir!
Wood. I pray reſolve me;
For I do ſuffer ſtrangely till I know
If he be in ſafety.
Leſſ. Fare you well: 'tis not fit
I ſhould relate his danger.
Wood. I muſt know't.
I have a quarrel to you already
For enticing my ſon-in-law to go over:
Tell me quickly, or I ſhall make it greater.
Leſſ. Then truth is, he is dangerously wounded.
Wood. But he's not dead, I hope.
Leſſ. No ſir, not dead:
Yet, ſure, your daughter may take liberty
To chooſe another.

Wood. Why, that gives him dead.

Leſſ. Vpon my life ſir, no: your ſon's in health,
As well as I am.

Wood. Strange! you deliver riddles.

Leſſ. I told you he was wounded, and 'tis true;
He is wounded in his reputation.
I told you likewiſe, which I am loth to repeat,
That your fair daughter might take liberty
To embrace another: that's the conſequence
That makes my beſt friend wounded in his fame.
This is all I can deliver.

Wood. I muſt have more of't;
For I do ſweat already, and I'll ſweat more:
'Tis good, they ſay, to cure aches; and o'the ſudden
I am ſore from head to foot. Let me taſte the worſt.

Leſſ. Know ſir, if ever there were truth in falſehood,
Then 'tis moſt true your daughter plays moſt falſe
With Bonvile, and hath choſe for her favourite
The man that now paſſ'd by me, Rochfield.

Wood. Say?
I would thou hadſt ſpoke this on Calais-ſands,
And I within my ſword and poniard's length
Of that falſe throat of thine! I pray ſir, tell me
Of what kin or alliance do you take me
To the gentlewoman you late mention'd?

Leſſ. You are her father.

Wood. Why then, of all men living, do you addreſs
This report to me, that ought of all men breathing

To have been the laſt o'the roll, except the husband,
That ſhould have heard of't?

Leſſ. For her honour, ſir, and yours;
That your good counſel may reclaim her.

Wood. I thank you.

Leſſ. She has departed ſir, upon my knowledge,
With jewels and with bracelets, the firſt pledges
And confirmation of the unhappy contract
Between herſelf and husband.

Wood. To whom?

Leſſ. To Rochfield.

Wood. Be not abuſ'd: but now,
Even now, I ſaw her wear them.

Leſſ. Very likely:
'Tis fit, hearing her husband is return'd,
That he ſhould re-deliver them.

Wood. But pray ſir, tell me,
How is it likely ſhe could part with them,
When they are lock'd about her neck and wriſts,
And the key with her husband?

Leſſ. O, ſir, that's but practiſe:
She has got a trick to uſe another key
Beſides her husband's.

Wood. Sirrah, you do lie:
And were I to pay down a hundred pounds
For every lie given, as men pay twelve-pence,
And worthily, for ſwearing, I would give thee
The lie, nay though it were in the court of honour,

So oft till of the thouſands I am worth
I had not left a hundred. For is't likely
So brave a gentleman as Rochfield is,
That did ſo much at ſea to ſave my life,
Should now on land ſhorten my wretched days
In ruining my daughter? A rank lie!
Have you ſpread this to any but myſelf?

Leſſ. I am no intelligencer.

Wood. Why then, 'tis yet a ſecret:
And that it may reſt ſo, draw! I'll take order
You ſhall prate of it no further.

Leſſ. O my ſword
Is enchanted ſir, and will not out o'the ſcabbard.
I will leave you ſir: yet ſay not I give ground,
For 'tis your own you ſtand on.

Enter Bonvile and Clare.

[*aſide*] Clare here with Bonvile! excellent! on this
I have more to work: this goes to Annabel,
And it may increaſe the whirlwind. [*Exit.*

Bon. How now ſir!
Come, I know this choler bred in you
For the voyage which I took at his entreaty:
But I muſt reconcile you.

Wood. On my credit,
There's no ſuch matter. I will tell you ſir,
And I will tell it in laughter, the cauſe of it

Is ſo poor, ſo ridiculous, ſo impoſſible
To be believ'd: ha, ha! he came even now
And told me that one Rochfield, now a gueſt
(And moſt worthy, ſir, to be ſo) in my houſe
Is grown exceedingly familiar with
My daughter.

Bon. Ha!

Wood. Your wife; and that he has had favours from her.

Bon. Favours!

Wood. Love-tokens I did call them in my youth:
Lures to which gallants ſpread their wings and ſtoop
In ladies' boſoms. Nay he was ſo falſe
To truth and all good manners, that thoſe jewels
You lock'd about her neck, he did proteſt
She had given to Rochfield. Ha! methinks o'the ſudden
You do change colour. Sir, I would not have you
Believe this in leaſt part: my daughter's honeſt,
And my gueſs is a noble fellow; and for this
Slander deliver'd me by Leſſingham
I would have cut his throat.

Bon. As I your daughter's,
If I find not the jewels 'bout her.

Clare. Are you return'd
With the Italian plague upon you, jealouſy?

Wood. Suppoſe that Leſſingham ſhould love my daughter,
And thereupon faſhion your going over,
As now your jealouſy, the ſtronger way
So to divide you, there were a fine crotchet!

Do you ſtagger ſtill? If you continue thus,
I vow you are not worth a welcome home
Neither from her nor me.—See here ſhe comes.

Re-enter Rochfield and Annabel.

Clare. I have brought you home a jewel.
Anna. Wear it yourſelf;
For theſe I wear are fetters, not favours.
Clare. I look'd for better welcome.
Roch. Noble ſir
I muſt woo your better knowledge.
Bon. O dear ſir
My wife will beſpeak it for you.
Roch. Ha, your wife!
Wood. Bear with him ſir, he's ſtrangely off o'the hinges.
Bon. [*aſide*] The jewels are i'the right place: but the jewel
Of her heart ſticks yonder.—You are angry with me
For my going over.
Anna. Happily more angry for your coming over.
Bon. I ſent you my will from Dover.
Anna. Yes ſir.
Bon. Fetch it.
Anna. I ſhall ſir, but leave your ſelf-will with you. [*Exit.*
Wood. This is fine; the woman will be mad too.
Bon. Sir I would ſpeak with you.
Roch. And I with you of all men living.
Bon. I muſt have ſatisfaction from you.

Roch. Sir, it grows upon the time of payment.
Wood. What's that, what's that? I'll have no whiſpering,

Re-enter Annabel with the will,

Anna. Look you, there's the patent
Of your deadly affection to me,
Bon. 'Tis welcome.
When I gave myſelf for dead, I then made over
My land unto you: now I find your love
Dead to me, I will alter 't.
Anna. Vſe your pleaſure.
A man may make a garment for the moon
Rather than fit your conſtancy,
Wood. How's this?
Alter your will!
Bon. 'Tis in mine own diſpoſing:
Certainly I will alter 't.
Wood. Will you ſo, my friend?
Why then, I will alter mine too.
I had eſtated thee, thou peeviſh fellow,
In forty thouſand pounds after my death:
I can find another executor.
Bon. Pray ſir, do.
Mine I'll alter without queſtion.
Wood. Doſt hear me?
An if I change not mine within this two hours,
May my executors cozen all my kindred

To whom I bequeath legacies!

Bon. I am for a lawyer, ſir.

Wood. And I will be with one as ſoon as thyſelf,
Though thou rid'ſt poſt to the devil. [*Exit Bon.*

Roch. Stay, let me follow and cool him.

Wood. O, by no means:
You'll put a quarrel upon him for the wrong
H' as done my daughter.

Roch. No, believe it ſir;
He's my wiſh'd friend.

Wood. O come, I know the way of 't;
Carry it like a French quarrel, privately whiſper,
Appoint to meet, and cut each other's throats
With cringes and embraces. I proteſt
I will not ſuffer you exchange a word
Without I overhear 't.

Roch. Vſe your pleaſure. [*Exeunt Woodroff and Rochfield.*

Clare. You are like to make fine work now.

Anna. Nay, you are like
To make a finer buſineſs of 't.

Clare. Come, come,
I muſt ſolder you together.

Anna. You! why, I heard
A bird ſing lately, you are the only cauſe
Works the diviſion.

Clare. Who, as thou ever lov'dſt me?
For I long, though I am a maid, for 't.

Anna. Leſſingham.

Clare. Why then, I do proteſt myſelf firſt cauſe
Of the wrong which he has put upon you both;
Which, pleaſe you to walk in, I ſhall make good
In a ſhort relation. Come, I'll be the clew
To lead you forth this labyrinth, this toil
Of a ſuppoſ'd and cauſeleſs jealouſy.
Cankers touch choiceſt fruit with their infection,
And fevers ſeize thoſe of the beſt complexion. [*Exeunt.*

Scene 2.

Enter Woodroff and Rochfield.

Wood. Sir, have I not ſaid I love you? if I have,
You may believe 't before an oracle,
For there's no trick in't but the honeſt ſenſe.
Roch. Believe it! that I do ſir.
Wood. Your love muſt then
Be as plain with mine, that they may ſuit together.
I ſay you muſt not fight with my ſon Bonvile.
Roch. Not fight with him ſir?
Wood. No, not fight with him ſir.
I grant you may be wrong'd, and I dare ſwear
So is my child; but he is the husband you know,
The woman's lord, and muſt not always be told
Of his faults neither: I ſay you muſt not fight.

Roch. I'll ſwear it, if you pleaſe, ſir.
Wood. And forſwear, I know 't,
Ere you lay ope the ſecrets of your valour:
It is enough for me I ſaw you whiſper,
And I know what belongs to 't.
Roch. To no ſuch end, aſſure you.
Wood. I ſay you cannot fight with him
If you be my friend, for I muſt uſe you:
Yonder's my foe, and you muſt be my ſecond.

Enter Leſſingham.

Prepare thee, ſlanderer, and get another
Better than thyſelf too; for here's my ſecond,
One that will fetch him up and firk him too:—
Get your tools; I know the way to Calais-ſands,
If that be your fence-ſchool:—he'll ſhow you tricks, faith;
He'll let blood your calumny: your beſt guard
Will come to a *peccavi*, I believe.
Leſſ. Sir, if that be your quarrel,
He is a party in it, and muſt maintain
The ſide with me: from him I collected
All thoſe circumſtances concern your daughter,
His own tongue's confeſſion.
Wood. Who? from him?
He will belie to do thee a pleaſure, then,
If he ſpeak any ill upon himſelf:
I know he ne'er could do an injury.

Roch. So pleaſe you, I'll relate it ſir.

Enter Bonvile, Annabel, and Clare.

Wood. Before her husband, then,—and here he is,
In friendly poſture with my daughter too:
I like that well.—Son bridegroom and lady bride,
If you will hear a man defame himſelf,
For ſo he muſt if he ſay any ill,
Then liſten.

Bon. Sir I have heard this ſtory
And meet with your opinion in his goodneſs:
The repetition will be needleſs.

Roch. Your father has not ſir: I will be brief
In the delivery.

Wood. Do, do, then: I long to hear it.

Roch. The firſt acquaintance I had with your daughter
Was on the wedding-eve.

Wood. So; 'tis not ended yet, methinks.

Roch. I would have robb'd her.

Wood. Ah, thief!

Roch. That chain and bracelet which ſhe wears upon her
She ranſom'd with the full eſteem in gold,
Which was with you my venture.

Wood. Ah, thief again!

Roch. For any attempt againſt her honour, I vow
I had no thought on.

Wood. An honeſt thief, faith, yet.

Roch. Which ſhe as nobly recompenſ'd, brought me home,
And in her own diſcretion thought it meet,
For cover of my ſhame, to call me couſin.
Wood. Call a thief couſin! why, and ſo ſhe might,
For the gold ſhe gave thee ſhe ſtole from her husband;
'Twas all his now: yet 'twas a good girl too.
Roch. The reſt you know ſir.
Wood. Which was worth all the reſt,—
Thy valour, lad; but I'll have that in print,
Becauſe I can no better utter it.
Roch. Thus jade unto my wants
And ſpurr'd by my neceſſities, I was going,
But by that lady's counſel I was ſtay'd
(For that diſcourſe was our familiarity):
And this you may take for my recantation;
I am no more a thief.
Wood. A bleſſing on thy heart!
And this was the firſt time, I warrant thee, too.
Roch. Your charitable cenſure is not wrong'd in that.
Wood. No; I knew 't could be but the firſt time at moſt:
But for thee, brave valour, I have in ſtore
That thou ſhalt need to be a thief no more.

[*Soft muſic within.*

Ha! what's this muſic?
Bon. It chimes an *Io pæan* to your wedding ſir,
If this be your bride.
Leſſ. Can you forgive me? some wild diſtractions
Had overturn'd my own condition

And ſpilt the goodneſs you once knew in me:
But I have carefully recover'd it
And overthrown the fury on 't.
Clare. It was my cauſe
That you were ſo poſſeſſ'd: and all theſe troubles
Have from my peeviſh will original:
I do repent, though you forgive me not.
Leſſ. You have no need for your repentance then,
Which is due to it: all's now as at firſt
It was wiſh'd to be.
Wood. Why, that's well ſaid of all ſides.

FINIS

SVVM
MATTHÆVS